he usually is much more concerned than his precursor with minor improvements to painting, flooring, lighting, and heating, which must have seriously affected patients' lives. Rather typically, he reports in 1877 that "all the wards in the building have been ... improved and present a cheerful appearance" (238) -- and, always the conservative professional, he bothers to point out that the predominant light blue colour of the walls in the wards has nothing to do with General Pleasanton's blue glass theory; it is "pleasant for the eye to rest upon, just as is the verdure of nature" (239).[v]

Preoccupations and obsessions similar if not identical to those of his more illustrious predecessor, appear altered from Workman's day, now in some process of devolution, disintegration, or decay. Some of these processes are restrained and controlled; most are irreversible. Occasionally Clark does effect some long-awaited improvement, but so late that the process it was intended to fulfil either no longer exists, or now appears to be moving in reverse. One such process is the acquisition and liquidation of the Asylum farm. Workman had annually reported its growth and development. In 1885 Clark reports that it has shrunk from 105 acres five years ago to 79, thanks to incursions from the Central Prison brick yards, the Mercer Reformatory, and the railroads. By 1886 the farm is virtually gone, the Asylum having lost another 60 acres. Subsequently Clark must build "new walls on our own boundaries out of the old material" (1888, 4). These mark a severely curtailed grounds: a continuation of Shaw Street on the East and of Dovercourt on the west (1888, 4). In 1889 1,600 feet of wall are reconstructed, out of material from the old wall, to mark the new boundaries.

The Asylum's notoriously complex and inefficient heating and plumbing systems are similar commonplaces. As early as 1879 Clark complains that the heating is still done "by a hot water system" using 35 furnaces. Dismantling and cleaning them takes the mason two months' work every year, they require constant labour to fill and keep burning, and refilling the coal bins in the basement pollutes the lower flowers with dust. In 1889 two boilers are introduced for the production of steam heat, replacing 8 of the "antiquated brick furnaces," by then already over forty years old.

Part of the main drain "running parallel to the main building" collapses in the spring of 1876 and has to be replaced. Clark reiterates Workman's old complaint about "the faulty construction of the water-closets in the wings ...